

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House of Representatives on Thursday released the final draft of its health insurance reform legislation, the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962). The bill includes a provision drafted by Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) that would correct a problem that causes Central Coast doctors to be underpaid for treating Medicare patients.

The language would fix a problem that mislabels 14 California counties as "rural," meaning doctors are undercompensated for Medicare procedures. Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz are among the counties affected by this problem.

Rep. Farr on Thursday released the following statement:

"We've seen more than three months of debate, hearings and negotiation on how to reform our health insurance system to ensure lower costs and increase choice for all Americans. This bill, along with the language that will fix our doctor reimbursements in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz, is a huge step toward meeting those goals.

"We're not done yet. The bill still has to pass the House floor and be reconciled with the Senate version, but the end is in sight. The bill that has been crafted will provide coverage for millions of Americans, lower cost for everyone and maintain the choice that Americans have come to expect.

"My provision will directly affect Central Coast seniors who are having trouble finding doctors who will agree to treat Medicare patients. By offering competitive reimbursement levels, our doctors will be able to treat more patients and our local hospitals will be able to recruit the physicians they need to maintain service levels.

"I'm eager to get see legislation enacted that will help every single American find, afford and hold onto health insurance. It's time to pass this bill."

Rep. Farr's provision is Section 1125 in the House health reform bill, located on page 408. You

can read the final House version of the bill here: http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111_ahcaa.pdf.

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